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I would like to request that the Public Service Commission (PSC) DENY the rate increase requested by SCANA's utility division henceforth referred to as SCE&G. At a time when our state has a 12.9% unemployment rate, when workers are being asked to take furloughs, cuts in pay and receiving no pay increases, state agencies are being forced to furlough workers, curtail both spending and services (in some cases vital), small private businesses are struggling simply to stay in business, it is DEFINITELY not the time to approve this increase.

It would be a simple solution for our state and local governments simply to resolve their budget crises by raising taxes. We have seen firehouses taken out of service, cuts to law enforcement, and our education system has been forced to lay off teachers and cut back on activities. These shortfalls could easily be overcome with a tax increase. HOWEVER, even government has realized that an increased tax burden on businesses and individuals is not a practical answer to the monetary woes they are experiencing at this time.

Please require SCE&G to do what all other federal, state, and local governments, as well as businesses and private citizens are being required to do. LIVE WITHIN THEIR PRESENT MEANS. Already, rate increases have been approved (and we will all be paying) for two new facilities, which may or may not receive federal approval and, therefore, may or may not benefit the public.

SCE&G chose to move into a new opulent headquarters during this time of frugality by most other corporations. I feel it is time for the PSC to require SCE&G to monitor their spending as do other responsible agencies, corporations, and private citizens.

Finally, PSC is not solely to be responsible for supporting this utility. The Commission has a responsibility to the citizens of South Carolina primarily. PSC is not simply a water tap that SCE&G can turn on when they have emptied their coffers, ask for a rate increase and the request approved, and the glass is then again full. I believe PSC has the responsibility to admonish SCE&G to utilize the resources they have in a more responsible manner. SCE&G uses the same old basis for this request "the cost of fuel has gone up." Yes, it has, and the rest of us are experiencing the same cost, and we must live within our current budget by making sacrifices along the way. Let's make SCE&G do the same!

Sincerely

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